



808
52

SUFFICIENCY
OF WATER.

Baptist Union Theological Seminary
LIBRARY.

Library No. 3748

Shelf No.

88

Presented by

Chicago.

187 2

The University of Chicago
Libraries



Reginald A. Harpelle, Librarian, 600 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.



The University of Chicago Libraries



Baptist Union Theol. Sem. Coll.



THE

Sufficiency of Water for Baptizing,

AT JERUSALEM,

AND ELSEWHERE IN PALESTINE,

AS RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT;

SET FORTH IN A LETTER

BY THE

REV. GEORGE W. SAMSON.

Philadelphia:

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,

118 ARCH STREET

BV808

.S 2



"Life"

Baptist Union Theol. Sem. Coll.

THE
SUFFICIENCY OF WATER FOR BAPTIZING,
AT JERUSALEM, AND ELSEWHERE IN PALESTINE.

TO THE REV. G. W. SAMSON.

Boston, April 1, 1851.

REV AND VERY DEAR SIR,—As you have lately visited Palestine, and enjoyed ample means of becoming acquainted with the interesting localities of Jerusalem, and with other places connected with the history of baptism as presented in the New Testament, I have a request to make. It is this. That you communicate such facts as may illustrate the points discussed in Dr. Ripley's manuscript, which you saw at my house yesterday.

Yours, with much esteem and christian love,
I. C.

REPLY.

REV. DR. CHASE.

Dear Sir,—You have asked me to note down some personal observations and impressions as to

the facilities offered for immersion at Jerusalem, and other localities in Palestine, where in the New Testament the rite of baptism is recorded to have been administered. It is no easy task you demand ; though at first it might seem a simple one. The eye certainly is the instructor of the mind, and the knowledge gained by sight is indeed the surest and the most positive we can obtain ; yet many things come in to restrict the extent, and to modify the real value, of such knowledge. After all the crowds of Christian men that have traversed throughout the length and breadth of the Holy Land, there are some spots of interest which have not been sought out. Moreover, many that have been visited have been but imperfectly explored and more imperfectly described ; for only the jaded traveler himself knows how the fatigues of constant journeying take away the mind's stimulus and zest, and make the eye heavy and the pen sluggish over the evening journal. Yet again, scenes that are examined with leisure and interest take a form and a hue corresponding to our previous prepossessions ; things that one person would distinctly observe being unconsciously overlooked by another. And still once more, when the mind in distant, subsequent years, endeavors to run back and review the thousand varied scenes long past from

vision, the keenest observer, and the most sincere and faithful chronicler, will inevitably sometimes mistake the images of fancy for the remembrance of realities. "Charity believeth all things, hopeth all things;" and a large measure of the exercise of that grace is justly due toward either of two travelers who may widely differ as to their statement of matters of eyesight and as to impressions derived from scenes visited. I feel assured, therefore, that, in reading this letter, you will not be hasty to detect any unjust censure of others who differ with the writer; that you will feel the value of citations from the writings of men who have traveled through Palestine in ages long gone by, before the difference of opinion now existing among Christians as to the mode of baptism had assumed its present marked tone, and when, therefore, men wrote free from the bias of prepossession; and that moreover you will charitably excuse any statement of an impression which may seem to you to indicate that the writer's own mind has been warped from the nice line of a just conclusion, since the great Apostle evidently speaks of an attribute belonging only to the All-Perfect when he says, "*We know that the judgment of God is according to truth.*"

Some of the Ancient Chroniclers.

Before we enter, then, on our survey, allow me to recall from the treasures of your own lifetime's study the honored names of some of those men who have gone before us in their visits to the scenes where Christian baptism was first administered ; that thus, when we shall stand and view the localities they describe, we may be prepared rightly to weigh and to compare their testimony. First among the early Christian writers who particularly describe the places hallowed in the life of Christ is the famed Bourdeaux Pilgrim, who wrote in Latin an account of his visit to Palestine, A. D. 333. Previously to that age, indeed, numberless Christian scholars and pilgrims, as we know, had traversed the Holy Land, visiting its hallowed scenes ; for Jerome, in his beautiful eulogy on Paula, a Roman lady who was descended from the renowned Scipios, and who during his day had visited Palestine, states, that great numbers of pilgrims, (to use his own words,) "*through all the ages from the ascension of the Lord to the time in which we live,*" journeyed through Palestine, among which pilgrims he mentions men from "India, Ethiopia, Britannia, Hibernia."* During that early age, however, the necessity

* Jerome, Epist. XXII.

had not yet arisen for any thing but a bare mention, such as Origen, for instance, makes of the localities then well known; just as the time has not yet arrived when Americans need in the history of Washington any thing more than a mere reference to places now familiar, as Bunker Hill, Saratoga, and Yorktown. When, however, Christianity became the established religion of the Roman empire, then detailed descriptions of places whose localities were known to residents of Palestine was demanded by distant believers in Christ: as localities in this country must be described to an Englishman, Frenchman, or Italian. When that necessity arose, the Grecian Eusebius, who was born at Cæsarea in Palestine, A. D. 270, and lived and died there, wrote an extended history of the Christian Church, and wrote also a description of localities in his native land hallowed in the life of Christ and of his Apostles. Then also Jerome, who had been baptized at Rome at about forty years of age, came and dwelt at Bethlehem, near Jerusalem, for more than thirty years, from A. D. 386 until his death, A. D. 420; preparing there his version of the Old Testament in Latin, and visiting again and again, and describing the sacred spots of the Holy Land. The testimony of these early writers has been deemed invaluable on every point of Bibli-

cal geography; and their statements, therefore, which may show the facilities for immersion at Jerusalem and in Palestine, are of the first importance. In the age next following, from the time of Constantine to the day when Jerusalem was taken by the followers of Mohammed, A. D. 637, pilgrims still flocked to tread the venerated soil; as a specimen of whom may be mentioned Arculfus, a French bishop, who on his return from Palestine was cast away on the coast of Scotland, where a Scotch abbot named Adamnanus wrote out his account of his travels, and presented the record to King Alfred, A. D. 698. During the Mohammedan supremacy then succeeding, other adventurous Christian scholars recorded their travels in the Holy Land; and when the Crusades restored the sacred places again to Christians, numberless chroniclers penned their notices; some of which are of great value on the question we would investigate. Pages could be filled with merely the names of those who, in later centuries, down to our time, have visited and written descriptions of scenes in Palestine. Selecting from among the more valuable of these honest chroniclers, so far as their works are in our reach, and storing our memories with what they have recorded to aid our investigation, let us go, thus prepared, to stand amid the scenes

where Christ's apostles baptized, and there examine for ourselves the facilities offered for immersion.

Supplies of Water at Jerusalem.

Perhaps the student of the New Testament finds most difficulty in accounting satisfactorily for the immersion of the great numbers converted in the early days of Christianity at *Jerusalem*. The facilities for the performance of this rite in and about the Holy City, therefore, demand the first notice. The nearest living stream to Jerusalem in which immersion could be performed is the *Jordan*, which is distant fifteen miles, or about a five hours' journey; and moreover there is no natural sheet of standing water within the same distance. The *brook* Kedron, often mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, is, as the original term indicates, nothing but the bed through which the rains of winter drain off between the eastern wall of the city and Mount Olivet; and its channel is therefore dry in the early spring, several weeks before the period, in the month of June, when the feast of Pentecost occurred. Unfavorably situated, therefore, as this great capital is in reference to *natural* provisions for water, as might be expected, the arrangements for an *artificial* supply are on a scale peculiarly extensive. The

cisterns, reservoirs, and pools prepared by Solomon, Hezekiah, and Herod (not to mention other rulers), for this purpose, have been the admiration of men from every part of the world in many a succeeding age. The *sources* from which this supply is obtained are principally *five*; from a fine natural fountain or spring breaking forth from underneath the rocky rise on which the old temple stood; from the winter rains, gathered as they fell into cisterns under the court-yards of private houses and of public buildings, such as the temple and the castles; from the extensive drainage of the winter rains gathered from the northern and western hills, whose slope for a mile around converges into the valley of Gihon; from a single large well, pierced to a great depth, in the valley of Hinnom; and, finally, from natural springs in the hills seven or eight miles south of the city, the waters of which springs are gathered first into a large underground reservoir, whence they flow through a narrow passage to three immense tanks some quarter of a mile distant, called "the Pools of Solomon," whence, again, they are conducted by a massive aqueduct to the city. It should perhaps be added, that though at present there is but a single natural spring in Jerusalem, and but a single well (and that a very deep one in the valley outside) fed by living springs, yet there

were probably, before King Hezekiah's day, other fountains about the city. Solomon was crowned at "Gihon," which Josephus calls "the *fountain of Gihon*." Hezekiah "stopped the upper *water-course of Gihon*," and "all the *fountains* without the city."* Perhaps, if excavations could be made, it would be found that the fountain now gushing so copiously from under the ancient temple area is furnished by concealed streams brought from without the city.† The settlement of this question, however, is unimportant to our present inquiry.

Various Facilities for Baptism common to most Eastern Towns.

It is worthy of a passing notice, that even the cisterns of Jerusalem are not unadapted to the rite of immersion. Any one who has visited the immense ancient reservoirs at Constantinople, or those about ancient Baïæ in Italy, will have some idea of what is found throughout Palestine, and especially at Jerusalem. The visitor descends by steps into a vast subterranean hall, sometimes covering acres in extent and supported by scores

* 1 Kings i. 33, 38; 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4, 30. Josephus, Antiq., VII. 14. 5.

† See Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 512; and Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. III. pp. 634-638.

of columns, where water stands, increasing in depth as a person advances along the sloping bottom, offering the most favorable opportunity possible for immersion. . Such cisterns even in Jacob's day seem to have existed in this land, where they are so much needed ; and the historian Moses, who had occasion often to allude to them, deems it of importance to mention, that the one into which Joseph was cast by his brethren "was empty, there'was no water in it."* Many such reservoirs, *without water*, Dr. Robinson describes on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.† Several such, of magnificent size, containing water deep enough for immersion, are found on the road from Jerusalem by the tomb of Moses to the Jordan.‡ Underneath the grotto of Jeremiah, near the northern wall of Jerusalem, is such a reservoir. Entering a side door and descending a few feet, the traveler finds himself in a fine ante-room,

* Gen. xxxvii. 24.

† Robinson's Researches, Vol. II. pp. 353, 395-398.

‡ At a distance of 2h. 10m. from Neby Mousa on the road to Jerusalem, at a place called er-Reib er-Rohawah, near the junction of Wady Rohawah with Wady Sidr, are fine springs of water, and three noble reservoirs cut into the rocky side of the valley. Into one, which is about 25 by 40 feet, the entrance is by a doorway and staircase. Another, about 50 feet by 60, has an open front and a gradual slope to the water.

twenty or twenty-five feet square, cut in the rock. Passing through a side door and descending by a stairway twenty-five or thirty feet farther, he stands in a large subterranean hall, about sixty feet square, whose arched top is supported by columns, and whose sloping bottom is nearly covered with water; into which he can descend to a considerable depth.

That such cisterns, and other facilities for bathing, were peculiarly abundant about the cities of Palestine in the age of the Apostles, Josephus is witness; who often mentions the aqueducts, and baths, and reservoirs, and costly fountains, which Herod before Christ's day built, and which after Christ's day existed in different towns of Judea, as Ascalon, Cæsarea, and Herodion, and in different quarters of Jerusalem, as under the towers of Hippicus and Phasaëlus, and of Antonia, "the castle" into which Paul was borne.* That such baths and cisterns were used by the Apostles for immersion seems to be indicated by the Bourdeaux Pilgrim, who, visiting the Cæsarea where Peter baptized Cornelius, about three hundred years after that event, records, "There is the bath of Cornelius the centurion, who did much alms." The frequency with which

* Josephus, *Antiq.*, XV. 9. 4 and 6; *wars*, I. 21. 10 and 11; V. 4. 2; V. 5. 8.

such reservoirs are met, not only in Palestine, but in Southern Italy and the whole Levant, removes from the mind of the inquiring traveler all difficulty as to facilities for immersion at Jerusalem, Philippi, Corinth, Rome, and elsewhere, in the Apostles' day; as from the mind of the late Dr. Judson the same difficulty was removed by observing the baths in the jail-yards of Burmah and India. While, then, the *lexicographer* finds the meaning of the word used for this ordinance to be immersion, the ancient and the modern Christian traveler alike find no difficulty as to the means for immersion, even when he has examined only the *ordinary* conveniences for bathing in an Oriental city.

Pools at Jerusalem.

Passing, however, these facilities for immersion common to most Eastern towns, observe those peculiar accommodations offered at Jerusalem in the numerous large public *pools* of the city; six of which will claim our special notice. In devout harmony of soul with the ancient Psalmist, loving as he did the truth and honor of God, seeing that Jerusalem's ancient "towers," and "bulwarks," and "palaces" are all laid low, take we up the *spirit* of his language: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her. See the *pools*, mark ye well

her *fountains*, consider her *flowing waters*; that ye may tell it to the generation following."

1. *The Pool at Bethesda.*

Proceeding from the southern brow of Zion, where the Spirit of God is supposed to have been poured on the disciples of Jesus upon the memorable Pentecost, a few minutes' walk brings us to the north of the ancient temple-area on Mount Moriah. Here, in the open air, by the side of the wall of the ancient temple inclosure, is a long, broad excavation into the earth, the sides of which are built up with masonry of small stones, whose surface is covered with a hard, smooth cement. According to Dr. Robinson's measurement it is 360 feet long, 130 feet broad, and 75 deep, being now partly filled with rubbish. The natives call it "*Birket Isrâîl*,"—The Pool of Israel; and the tradition of ages has declared it to be the ancient Pool of Bethesda, mentioned in Christ's day.* Tacitus, the Roman historian, in describing the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans after Christ's day, says of the temple-area: "There were *pools* and cisterns for preserving rain water."† Eusebius, the Christian historian, three hundred years after Christ, speaks of the Pool of Bethesda thus: "Bexatha, a pool in Jerusalem, which is

* John v. 2.

† Tacitus' Hist. Vol. II.

the sheep-pool, anciently having five porticos; and now it is shown in the double pool at the same place, one of which is filled by the yearly rains, and the other of which shows its water in a singular manner, tinged with red, bearing the mark, as they say, of the sacrificial victims anciently washed in it; for which reason also it is called the sheep-pool, on account of the sacrifices." Jerome a few years later wrote: "Bethesda, a pool in Jerusalem which is called προβατική probatikē, and may be interpreted by us *sheep-pool*. This had formerly five porches; and there are shown two lakes; one of which is usually filled by the winter rains; the other of which, in a wonderful manner tinged with red, as if by bloody waters, witnesses the marks of the ancient work done in it. For they say that victims were washed in it by the priests, whence also it received its name." The testimony of both these ancient inhabitants of Palestine agrees, that at their early day the pool of Bethesda was *well known* that it was *in the city*, that it was so near *the temple* as to be convenient for the washing of sacrifices, that it was then *filled with water*, and that it was (though in two sections and then without porticos) the *same structure* as the single pool which once was surrounded by covered colonnades. The Crusaders, eight hundred years later, found two

immense pools near the inclosure of the temple, filled with water by rain and aqueducts from a distance.* The Greek pilgrims who visited Jerusalem afterward, and travelers down to our day, describe the Pool of Bethesda at the same point. Dr. Robinson, though differing with ancient and modern authorities as to the identity of this pool with the ancient Bethesda, nevertheless agrees in all that is essential to our inquiry. He regards it as the fosse, excavated for the defense of the fortress Antonia, as rebuilt by Herod the Great; saying, however, "It was once evidently used as a reservoir;" and again, "That it was once filled with water is apparent from the lining of small stones and cement upon its sides;" and yet again, "The reservoir has now been dry for more than two centuries."† Here, then, was an expanse of water, in an open pool, *existing before Christ's day, covering more than an acre* of ground. Just such a body of water was needed for the purposes of bathing by the thousands of Jews who of old came up to Jerusalem, bringing their oxen and sheep for sacrifice; and whether they entered by the eastern, northern, or western gates, this immense reservoir was on their road as a convenient and needed place to perform the washings

* See Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 479, Note 3.

† Researches, Vol. I. pp. 429—432, 434, 490.

demanding by the Law. Accredited historians, who could no more mistake than a Sparks recording the life of Washington, declare that the Jewish priests used to wash the sacrificial victims here, and that hence it was called the "Sheep-pool." Here, or near this spot, was in Christ's day a pool so large that it had *five covered colonnades* about it, under which lay *a great multitude* of diseased persons, *free to bathe* there and have *ample room* for the bath. Here certainly has remained since Christ's day an expanse of water furnishing nine hundred and sixty baptisteries, each six feet by ten. When, therefore, in Christ's day, three thousand were converted at the Pentecost, and the converts had such "favor with the people" that they could continue "daily with one accord in the temple" in Christian worship, it is utterly inconceivable that they should find no facilities for Christian baptism according to the form Christ prescribed.

2. *The King's or Solomon's Pool.*

Passing now out of the eastern gate, from which the pool just described is but a stone's throw distant, descending thence the steep declivity to the bed of the Kedron, and proceeding from the Garden of Gethsemane down the valley southward, a ten minutes' walk brings us near the head of the

rich bottom which once formed "the King's Garden." Here, in the rocky hill-side, above which towers the wall of the temple, we descend beneath the arched roof of a natural cave, and by a flight of steps cut in the rock, to what is now called the "Fountain of the Virgin." It is probably the "King's Pool" mentioned by Nehemiah, to which Josephus gives the name of "Solomon's Pool."* At the foot of the steps we stand in a cavernous chamber "fifteen feet long by five or six wide," and "six or eight feet high," according to Dr. Robinson's measurement. From the side toward the temple, through an arched passage-way, enters a copious stream of water, which goes out on the opposite side through a passage-way large enough to stand up in. The water in the basin formed by the floor of this chamber is from one foot to three feet deep, any desired depth being in a few minutes attained by throwing a slight dam of earth and stones across the outlet; a practice which, as Dr. Robinson observed, is now resorted to by the natives.† At certain hours of the day, troops of Arab females from the opposite village of Selwan, (the ancient *Siloam* mentioned in the New Testament,) come with their water-jars on their heads, and, thronging down the steps, linger

* Neh. ii. 14; and Josephus, Wars, V. 4. 2.

† Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. pp. 500, 502.

to wade about in the cool pool and to bathe their feet and faces.* At other times it is so retired, that Dr. Robinson was able to change his raiment, and, wearing only a pair of Arab drawers, to spend a considerable time in examining the outlet to the pool of Siloam.† If Providence had designed this place expressly for immersion, there could hardly have been prepared a more convenient and appropriate font; furnishing as it does ample room, an abundant supply of water, and also (if needed) retirement even for change of raiment.

3. *The Pool of Siloam, with its smaller Reservoir.*

Proceeding now still down the valley about a quarter of a mile farther southward, we come to that spot so full of sacred interest, the "Pool of Siloam." It is an open reservoir, built into an excavation in the hill-side, and lined with hard cement. It is fifty-three feet long, eighteen broad, and nineteen deep. The wall next the valley is now so broken down, that not more than two or three feet of water stands in the bottom. The water enters from an arched passage-way high up on the side next the hill. Mounting the hill back

* Luke xiii. 4. See Spencer's East, (published at New York, 1850,) p. 311.

† Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 502.

of the Pool, we find a smaller reservoir, six or eight feet broad and eight or ten feet long, having a descent by steps to its bottom.* Into this smaller basin the water comes from the Pool of the Virgin just described; and doubtless the original supply is from the gushing source under the temple area and the aqueducts centering there.

In either the lower pool or upper basin, any depth of water may be readily obtained by damming temporarily the mouth of the outlet; a practice now resorted to, as Dr. Robinson has remarked.† It is evidently the fountain and the reservoir mentioned before the Babylonish captivity by Isaiah, after that captivity by Nehemiah, and in the day of our Saviour by John the Evangelist.‡ As to the permanence and abundance of the supply of water here furnished, the amplest evidence may be presented. Josephus, describing it as it was in the days of the apostles, says of *Siloam*: "That is the name of a fountain which hath sweet water in it, and that in great plenty;" and again, representing to his besieged countrymen the hopelessness of their holding out against the Romans, and exhorting them to surrender their city to Titus, he remarks,

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 497.

† Researches, Vol. I. 497.

‡ Isaiah viii. 6; Nehemiah iii. 15; John ix. 7, 11.

“You know that Siloam, as well as the other springs without the city, now have such a great quantity for your enemies, as is sufficient not only for drink both for themselves and their cattle, but also for watering their gardens.” The old Bourdeaux Pilgrim, who visited Palestine before Constantine’s day, after describing some things *within* the city, adds: “The pool which is called Siloam has four porticos; there is another large pool without.” Of this pool Jerome a few years later speaks, distinguishing the fountain and the pool of Siloam. An interesting description of the religious washings or bathings at this place, while the sacred structures of the Christian emperors yet stood, is given by Antonius the Martyr in the sixth century. Speaking of the fountain of Siloam, the pious chronicler says: “There is a circular church there, from under which rises Siloam; an inclosure of lattice-work, in one part of which men bathe, and in the other, women, before the benediction; in which waters many things are shown, and even leprous persons are cleansed. Also before the court is a vast pool, artificially constructed, in which the people bathe constantly, though at certain hours only; for that fountain sends forth many waters which descend through the valley of Jehoshaphat.” The bathing here mentioned seems to be a reli-

gious act. The mind accustomed to the opinions of that age will readily distinguish between the historian's statement of facts and the religious devotee's allusion to signs miraculous. The abundance of water supplied for bathing, and the freedom with which it was thus used, recalls to mind Christ's direction to the blind man, if it does not impress the scene of baptism at the Pentecost. The concurrent testimony of numerous other travelers in succeeding ages might be cited ; so that a chain of testimony from Christ's day to our own might present the facilities which Siloam always has afforded for immersion. And when one accustomed to honor the ordinance of baptism in its primitive simplicity now stands at this sacred spot, and beholds before him the copious gushing fountain, and the broad tank and vast pool to receive it, when he sees the freedom with which men and women, by scores, now come hither, and, damming up the broken wall and the circular outlet, bathe their persons, and wash their clothing, he wonders that any one who knows that the proper meaning of the word designating the ordinance of baptism is immersion, and who has visited this spot, could hesitate as to the facilities for that rite at Jerusalem.

4. *The Old Pool, or the Upper Pool in the Highway of the Fuller's Field.*

Having now surveyed the group of pools on the east of the city, we return to our starting-point, where on the southern brow of Zion the converts of the Pentecost were gathered, and proceeding again thence, let us visit the corresponding group of pools on the west of the city. A ten minutes' walk brings us to the "Castle of David," at the western gate. Passing through that gate, we proceed up the gentle ascent northwest, a distance of half a mile. Here, in the broad valley, where is centered the drain of the northern and western hills for a mile or two around, is a vast ancient pool dug into the earth and limestone rock, and its sides are built up with masonry and lined with cement. Its dimensions, according to Dr. Robinson, are, length 316 feet, breadth 218 feet at one end and 200 at the other, and depth 18 feet. It is probably one of the structures of which Solomon says, "I made me pools of water;" the one which even in Isaiah's early day was called "the *old* pool," and which the same prophet also speaks of as "the *upper* pool in the highway of the *fuller's field*;" the one also by which the Assyrian army encamped in Hezekiah's day, and from which that king brought

the water down into the two pools on the west of the city.* It is, then, a pool of very great antiquity, and one at which, when in proper repair, there was a quantity of water sufficient to accommodate the city dyers, to give drink to a besieging army, and to supply two other pools below. It now receives only the drain of the winter rains from the surrounding hills; but originally it seems to have been supplied by fountains in the neighborhood, which Hezekiah concealed by covering up and conducting underground their waters.† Near the bottom, on the side toward the city, an underground passage conducts its waters thither. Jerome, in the early Christian times, mentions it, attributing its construction to Solomon. The Crusaders speak of it, calling it "*Lacus Patriarchæ*," the Lake of the Patriarch, the former part of the name probably referring to its *size*, the latter to its *antiquity*. An old Norman Chronicle lately found in the Royal Library of Paris, and first published in 1843, a work containing facts of great value, speaks of this pool as it existed during the occupation of the Holy City

* Eccles. ii. 6; Isa. vii. 3; xxii. 11; 2 Kings xviii. 17; 2 Chron. xxxii. 30.

† 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14. See Robinson's Researches, Vol. I, p. 514, and the remarks above, pp. 10, 11, on the "Fountain of Gihon."

by the Franks, and represents it as still supplied with water, and used to give drink to the horses of the Crusaders' army. * Travelers of our day, who visit Jerusalem in April, a month after the winter rains, find this pool dry. Dr. Robinson explains the reason thus : "The tank was now dry, but in the rainy season it *becomes full*." Again : "It would seem to be filled in the rainy season by the waters which flow into it from the higher ground round about. Or rather, *such is its present state of disrepair* that it probably never becomes full." In further description of it he says : "The sides are built up with hewn stones laid in cement, with steps at the corners by which to descend into it." † Here then, again, is another broad basin of water, which could hardly have been better adapted to immersion if it had been constructed for that purpose. It is retired from the city : it is broad enough, covering more than *an acre and a half of ground*, to accommodate any supposable number of administrators ; and it has steps at the corners convenient for descent. In the days of Isaiah and Hezekiah, and again in the days of the Crusaders, it was well supplied with water, and now would be if a small sum were expended in repairing it. Nothing but the very

* William's Memoir, Appndix, No. II. Sect. 6.

† Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. pp. 352, 484.

perversity of scepticism would deny the probability, or doubt the certainty even, that in the days of Herod, the great fountain builder, (and hence in the time of Christ,) it furnished ample facilities for the immersion of Christian converts.*

5. *The Pool of Hezekiah.*

Turning our steps now toward the city again, in a few moments we reach the western gate whence we went out. Entering, passing the Castle of David, and bending through the narrow streets to the left, in two or three minutes we stand look-

* The suggestion may arise to some minds, that, when the pools of Jerusalem above described were *full*, the great depth of water would render them ill fitted for immersion. This difficulty will be removed by the following considerations. The supply of *rain-water* in these pools is now exhausted (and probably always was) early in the spring. As we have seen, on the testimony of Dr. Robinson and others, the main and permanent supply of water in all these pools is from aqueducts fed by *springs*. Of course the supply, except during the winter and early spring, would be a gradual one, and the depth of the water could be graduated at pleasure. We have seen that this is now precisely the fact at the two pools on the east side of the city; the people keeping the water at just such a height as they desire. That the same practice was pursued in our Saviour's day is evident; for the pool of Bethesda was then supplied with just the amount of water sufficient for bathing. Farther on, we shall perceive that the lower pool of Gihon, the largest of all these pools, is adapted, even when full, to immersion.

ing into the "Pool of Hezekiah." The general opinion is probably correct, that this is the work of Hezekiah, thus alluded to in the sacred history: He "made a pool and a conduit and brought water into the city." * Jerome mentions this pool as the Dragon Fountain alluded to by Nehemiah, describing it as "at the west of the city, near Mount Calvary." † The Crusaders, from its location evidently, called it the "Pool of the Holy Sepulchre." This reservoir, according to Dr. Robinson, is about one hundred and forty-four feet broad and two hundred and forty feet long. The natives now call it "Birket-el-Hûm-mâm," the Pool of the Bath; from the fact that a neighboring bath is supplied from it. Though hemmed around by houses, there are narrow alleys by which its sides are approached; and the people freely descend to wash, and to fill their water-jars. Of this pool Dr. Robinson says: "The reservoir is supplied with water during the rainy season by the small aqueduct or drain brought down from the Upper Pool, along the surface of the ground and under the wall at or near the Yâfâ Gate.

* 2 Kings xx. 20.

† Jerome on the article "Fons Draconis." This mention of it as a *fountain* seems to confirm the idea that the upper pool and this pool were once *supplied by a fountain* called Gihon. See Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 514.

When we last saw it, in the middle of May, it was about half full of water, which however was not expected to hold out during the summer." * The Rev. George Williams, an English clergyman who had resided fourteen months at Jerusalem, and who prepared his works with the aid of the accurate survey made in 1841 by the ordnance corps attached to the English force which recovered Syria from the Pacha of Egypt, adds these particulars: "There is a descent by steps into it at the northwest angle; and the water which in the rainy season runs in from the rude aqueduct at the southwest corner, occupies only a small part of the pool at the southeast angle." † This latter remark evidently refers to the quantity of water in the pool in the dry season of the year; for in April it is well filled, and even to the middle of May, as Dr. Robinson mentions, is well supplied with water. His former remark shows that the bottom is *sloping*, and thus favorable for descent into the water. Here then, again, near where the apostles stood preaching, is a pool which existed long before their day, furnishing even now an ample supply of water for bathing at

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p 487.

† Williams's Memoir, p. 19. The full title of his work is, "Historical and Descriptive Memoir on the Town and Environs of Jerusalem. To accompany the Ordnance Survey. By George Williams, B. D., Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. London. 1849."

the season of the ancient Pentecost, having every facility for a gradual descent into the water, covering more than an acre of ground, so as to furnish room for scores to enter together, and still generally used for the very purpose of bathing. It is not surprising that one whose early prepossessions were opposed to the mode of baptism indicated by the word which Christ's apostles used to express the rite, has not mentioned the natural and inevitable conclusion to which a view of this expanse must lead; but it would seem impossible that the mind bent on the inquiry should fail to see the facilities here offered for immersion.

6. *The Lower Pool of Gihon.*

Retracing our steps now to the western city gate, and proceeding on south still in the valley about a quarter of a mile, we come to the "Lower Pool of Gihon." It is rather a *pond* than a pool, unlike all the others about Jerusalem, being formed by two dams built across the bed of the valley; these dams forming the *ends* of the reservoir, while its *sides* are the sloping sides of the valley. It is in fact formed like a New England mill-pond; except that it has a dam at the *head* as well as at the *foot* of the pond. A covered passage leading from the upper pool comes in at the upper dam, and, though now dry like the upper pool, it was

originally supplied, doubtless, from that pool with the rain and spring water which once filled it. The immense aqueduct from the Pools of Solomon south of Bethlehem, also crosses the valley about two hundred and twenty feet above the upper end of this pool, and probably from this aqueduct a supply of water was also obtained; for the dam at the *head* of the pool (or pond) evidently indicates that the water in the pool was once made to rise above the ordinary level of the valley, so as to require a raised embankment to restrain its spread. The dimensions of this pool are, according to Dr. Robinson's measurement, as follows: length along the centre 592 feet; breadth at the north end 245 feet; and at the south end 275 feet; depth at the north end 35 feet, and at the south end 42 feet. This pool has generally been regarded as "the lower pool" mentioned by Isaiah, and is probably the work ascribed to Hezekiah by the prophet Isaiah and the two historians of the Jewish king.* Though this reservoir is now dry, in the days of the Crusaders it was well supplied with water. The Norman chronicler above alluded to calls it "*le Lai Germain*," the *Lake of Germain*, saying that "Germain had it made to collect the waters which descended from the mountains when it rained;" and he adds, "there

* Isa. xxii. 9; 2 Kings xx. 20; 2 Chron. xxxii. 30.

the horses of the city are watered.”* Another Latin chronicler of the same age, (A. D. 1177) calls the reservoir, in like manner, “Lacus Germani,” and says that it “is common for the use of the whole city.”† The reservoir is now called Birket es Sultân,—the *Sultan's Pool*; this designation probably denoting (as usual) *superiority*, either in size or excellence. Of its present condition and of its former supply of water, Dr. Robinson says: “A road crosses on the causeway at the southern end along which are fountains erected by the Muslims, and *once fed from the aqueduct which passes very near*. They were now dry. . . . This reservoir was probably *supplied from the rains and from the superfluous waters of the Upper Pool*. It lies directly in the natural channel by which the latter would flow off, but is now in ruins.”‡

Here then, again, is an immense reservoir,

* The Chronicler probably means simply that this Germanus *repaired* the reservoir; for William of Tyre, an earlier writer, mentions this same pool as celebrated in the times of the kings of Judah; and the continuator of William of Tyre mentions that this same Germanus, who was burgess of the city under Baldwin the Fourth, opened in a time of famine the well of Job, which had been filled up. See Williams's Memoir, pp. 55 and 63, and Appendix, No. II. Sect. 6.

† See Williams's Memoir, Appendix, No. II. Sect. 6.

‡ Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. pp. 435, 436.

acknowledged by all to have existed long before the days of Christ and of his apostles. So late as the days of the Crusaders, it was so abundantly supplied with water that all the city were allowed to use it freely, and it was the great watering-place for horses. From the rains, the aqueduct, and the Upper Pool, an ample supply of water could have been obtained to keep it full when those structures were in their perfection. The pool, of course, was made of its ample dimensions with the intention that it should be filled, and it is a presumption which no ingenuous mind would think of disputing, that it was, in its original perfection, kept filled. The days of the apostles were just subsequent to the time of Herod, who repaired with the greatest care the reservoirs at Jerusalem and throughout Palestine; and no foreign invasion had between his day and that of the apostles occurred to break up or impair those structures. There is, therefore, an historic certainty, that when the Spirit of God was poured out at Jerusalem, after Christ's ascension, there was in this single reservoir, covering as it does more than *four acres of ground*, and its sides having a slope just adapted to a descent for immersion,—there was, in this single reservoir, ample room for all the seventy, and for the twelve added, to act as administrators of the sacred rite. If

then, as the learned lexicographer seems to admit, the only ground for doubting that the rite practiced by the apostles was immersion, is the want of facilities at Jerusalem in their age for that observance, the sincere inquirer needs no longer to stumble at that imaginary difficulty. For, not the imaginings, nor even the personal investigations, of a fallible individual, have here been stated. On the other hand, the plain declarations of ancient, unprejudiced visitors, and the equally honest statements of those moderns who make the objection, have been brought together, and have been found to present a uniform picture by one who on the sacred soil has sought to compare and harmonize their views, and *from them to educe the truth* as it is in the Word of God. And if now, after our survey, you are in wonder that two minds, with all these same acknowledged facts before them, should come to conclusions so diverse, let me ask that you read again the first paragraph of this letter, and bear in mind that no man needs to exercise greater candor and charity than he who follows over the footsteps of eminent, but interested travelers.

Other places: Bethabara and Enon.

There are two or three other localities in *Palestine* where the rite of baptism is said to

have been administered in the days of Christ and of his apostles, which demand a brief notice. There are, first, the two spots at which John the Baptist administered the rite ; namely, Bethabara and Enon. The precise location of neither of these places can now be fixed ; yet the slight indefiniteness as to their exact situation does not at all impair our decision of the main question. Three of the Evangelists record that John baptized "*in the Jordan*;" conveying the impression that *in this stream alone* was the rite performed. The evangelist John mentions two particular localities where John baptized ; both of which there is the strongest reason for believing were *on the Jordan*, so that the four Evangelists harmonize in their statements. Now the River Jordan (as in our day is well known) is a stream supplying throughout its whole length peculiar facilities for immersion. Near ancient Jericho it was a stream of such size, that, by a special miracle, God divided its waters for the passage of Israel under Joshua, and afterward of Elijah and Elisha. Only at particular places could it in ancient times be forded, while at other points it must be crossed in a boat.* Above ancient Succoth and Sichem, we learn that in Jacob's age a river called Jabbok, so large that it must be passed at a ford,

* Josh. ii. 7 ; Judg. iii. 28 ; 2 Sam. xix. 18.

joined its waters to the Jordan; so that the united stream must have been throughout the greater part of its length of no small size.* What the Jordan was in that early day, it was in Christ's age, and has been ever since. The thorough exploration by Lieutenant Lynch, in the spring of 1848, has established its varying breadth at from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty feet, and its depth (increasing of course ordinarily as the breadth diminishes) from three to twelve feet.† The facilities for immersion

* Gen. xxxii. 22; Deut. iii. 16. The Yermâk, which enters the Jordan several miles north of Bethshean, is "40 yards wide," and "as wide and as deep nearly as the Jordan," and is "crossed by a bridge."—See Lynch's Expedition, pp. 191, 194, 196.

† Lieut. Lynch gives the *average* breadth and depth of the Jordan on the 1st, 2d, 4th, 5th, and 6th days of his descent. On the 8th and 9th there are separate notes; but on the 3d, and 7th there are none. The following are the details given:—

	Breadth.	Depth.	pp.
1st day	25 to 30 yds.		175
2d "	40 "	2½ to 6 ft.	184
3d "	(rapids) 40 " (as the Yermâk)		191, 194
4th "	45 "	4 ft.	203
5th "	30 to 70 "	2 to 10 ft.	221
6th "	56 "	4 ft.	238
7th "	(a short Sabbath's journey.)		
8th "	40 yds.	7 ft.	252
9th "	40 "	12 ft.	266
" "	50 "	11 ft.	267
" "	180 "	3 ft.	268

therefore, are, and always have been, sufficiently ample in any portion of the stream.

The point on the river, near Bethabara, at which John first baptized, is fixed by an unbroken and unvarying tradition. As early as one hundred and fifty years after Christ's day, the place was known ; just as Americans know, and always will know, the spot on the banks of James River where the first colony settled, the place on the Delaware where Washington crossed, and the point on the St. Lawrence where Wolfe landed, fought and fell. Such a spot could no more be forgotten than can Bunker Hill. Less than two hundred years after Christ was baptized, Origen, coming from Alexandria to visit, as travelers now do, the Holy Land, found the site then fixed by a permanent tradition. Alluding to the fact that, in some of the manuscripts of his day, the name of this place was Bethabara, and in others Bethany, (a difference arising perhaps from the frequent occurrence that a place *changed* its name, or that the same place had *two* names,) Origen says : " We were persuaded that we ought not to read *Bethany*, but *Bethabara*, having been in the region tracing the history of the footsteps of Jesus, and of his disciples and of the prophets." He adds : " There is shown, they say, on the bank of the Jordan, the Bethabara where

they relate that John baptized." The Latin pilgrim of A. D. 333, records the following: "*Thence* [from the Dead Sea] to the Jordan where John baptized is five miles. There is the place above the river, a little mount on the farther bank, where Elijah was taken up to heaven." In his day the place was known, its distance being particularly noted; and it was regarded as the same as that over which Elijah passed. The latter fact perhaps explains Origen's allusion to "the prophets" in the same connection. Eusebius has the following note: "Bethabara, where John was baptizing, beyond the Jordan. And the place is shown in which, also, many of the brethren, even to the present time, are anxious to receive the redemption." Jerome's note is much the same: "Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John baptized unto penitence. Whence also even to this day very many of the brethren, that is, of the number of those believing, desiring there to be born again, are baptized in the life-giving flood." In his beautiful letter in memory of Paula, a devout Roman female who had made a pilgrimage through the Holy Land, Jerome has this eloquent passage, suggesting other historical traditions as to this locality: "Scarcely had night passed when with most fervent ardor she came to the Jordan. She stood on the bank of the stream, and, as the sun

rose, she remembered the Sun of righteousness ; how in the midst of the bed of the river the priests planted their dry footsteps, and at the word of Elijah and of Elisha, the waters standing on either side, an open passage offered itself ; and how the Lord by his baptism cleansed the waters polluted with mud and stained with the slaughter of the whole human race." The Scotch Abbot Adamnanus, who entertained the shipwrecked French bishop in King Alfred's day, about A. D. 698, gathered from the pilgrim's lips these particulars, as the venerable Bede has transcribed them : " In the place in which the Lord was baptized there stands a wooden cross as high as the neck, which sometimes is hidden by the water rising above it ; from which place the farther bank, that is, the eastern, is a sling's throw distant ; while the hither bank bears on the summit of a little hill a large monastery renowned as a Church of Saint John the Baptist ; from which over a bridge supported by arches they are accustomed to descend to that cross and to pray."

The river, then, seven hundred years after Christ's day, at the point of his baptism, must have been several rods wide, and it is indicated that the depth east of the cross was over a man's head. Chateaubriand, the modern French tourist, mentions that the river at the same spot is "six

or seven feet in depth under the bank, and nearly fifty paces (or one hundred and seventy-five feet) in breadth." Dr. Robinson, though he spent a day or two in the valley, did not make any estimate; but, quoting from a certain English traveler of 1815, named Turner, he gives the rough guess, "rather more than fifty feet wide and five feet deep."* Lieut. Lynch gives the general dimensions of the river in that region as "forty yards wide and twelve feet deep."

In farther description of his own impressions at the spot, Lieut. Lynch records: "9½ o'clock P. M. We arrived at 'El Meshra,' the bathing place of the Christian pilgrims. . . . This ford is consecrated by tradition as the place where the Israelites passed over with the ark of the covenant, and where our blessed Saviour was baptized by John. Feeling that it would be desecration to moor the boats at a place so sacred, we passed it, and with some difficulty found a landing below. My first act was to bathe in the consecrated stream; thanking God, first, for the pre-

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. II. p. 261. The opposing tradition alluded to here and at p. 257, though mentioned by English travelers of the last half-century, has no authority, or even mention, among the earlier writers; it was evidently the result of a temporary spirit of controversy between the Greek and Roman Church, and is now seldom heard of or mentioned.

cious favor of being permitted to visit such a spot, and secondly for his protecting care throughout our perilous passage. For a long time after, I sat upon the bank, my mind oppressed with awe, as I mused upon the grēat and wondrous events which had here occurred. . . . Tradition, sustained by the geographical features of the country, makes this the scene of the baptism of the Redeemer. . . . On that wondrous day, when the Deity veiled in flesh descended the bank, all nature, hushed in awe, looked on,—and the impetuous river, in grateful homage, must have stayed its course and gently laved the body of its Lord. . . . Over against this was no doubt the Bethabara of the New Testament. . . . The interpretation of Bethabara is ‘a place of passage over.’ Our Lord repaired to Bethabara where John was baptizing; and as the ford probably derived its name from the passage of the Israelites with the ark of the covenant, the inference is not unreasonable that this spot has been doubly hallowed.” Speaking of the caravan of pilgrims, who came on the annual bathing-day, the very morning the American party were encamped there, Lieut. Lynch says: “The pilgrims descended to the river where the bank gradually slopes. Above and below, it is precipitous. The banks must have been always high in places, and

the water deep. . . . Each one plunged himself, or was dipped by another, three times below the surface, in honor of the Trinity.”*

Lieut. Lynch is not alone among intelligent Americans who thus feel and act at this sacred spot; for the American mind, cultured remote from the realm of superstitious tradition and of irrational scepticism also, has learned to “distinguish things that differ.” The Rev. Mr. Spencer, of the Episcopal Church in New York, thus records his experience at this hallowed place : “Alone in a woody and retired spot, protected by the shade of the sycamore, the ilex, and the willow, I disrobed and advanced into the river. The bank is very declivitous, and in a few moments I was nearly out of my depth. . . . From the depth of my soul I blessed God for the privileges of his covenant sealed to us by the holy sacrament of baptism ; and I seemed to myself to be looking on the solemn and touching scene of our Lord’s baptism by his messenger whom he sent to prepare the way before him. Earnestly did I supplicate that God of his mercy would wash and purify my soul, body, and spirit, by the blood of Christ Jesus our Lord ; and with the deepest reverence, remembering whom I was worshipping, I bowed my head beneath the waters of

* Lynch’s Expedition, pp. 255–263.

the Jordan three times, and pronounced each time the name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, the TRIUNE GOD of our salvation.”*

The most impressive season for a visit to this hallowed spot on the Jordan, is during Easter week, in the middle of April, when a mighty throng of from three to five thousand persons goes pouring out of the eastern and northern gates of Jerusalem for the annual bath. There are young and old, rich and poor, men and women, mounted on horses, camels, and donkeys, or plodding on foot. They are members chiefly of the various branches of the Eastern Church, Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, and Copts, only here and there a Roman Catholic and a European traveler being seen. They all retain, from the days of their fathers and of the apostles, the primitive ordinance of *immersion*, and though they have in infancy received from others the rite, they regard it almost indispensable to salvation that once in their lives they be immersed, on profession of their own faith, in the very spot where Jesus was baptized. Hence that immense multitude is every succeeding year an entirely *new* one; pilgrims gathered from Russia to Egypt, and from Greece to India. A Turkish guard of four hun-

* “The East,” by the Rev. J. A. Spencer, p. 392. New York, 1850.

dred men, with the governor of Jerusalem at their head, goes to guard the host from intestine strifes, and from attacks of the desert Arabs. The slow march of so vast a throng through the various defiles leading to the valley of the Jordan occupies the first day. The night encampment is near ancient Jericho, four or five miles from the sea. At midnight the whole camp is roused, and, a hasty breakfast being partaken, the traveler mounts into his saddle, and by one o'clock all are moving toward the sacred stream at the thrice sacred spot where Israel crossed, where Elijah passed, and where John baptized the Son of God. So tediously slow is the movement of the motley throng in the dark, that the gray dawn is streaming along the eastern mountain peaks ere the river is in sight. Then, with a headlong rush, all hasten to plunge in the turbid waters; laying aside on the banks their upper garments, wading out to their middle in the stream, and then plunging themselves forward three times beneath the waters. In the sacred rite, strong youths support persons tottering and trembling with age, and parents plunge their little children, while vigorous men swim off beyond their depth, breasting the rapid current and again and again bowing their heads beneath the reverend tide. The Christian scholar, as he stands and gazes on the impressive

scene, learns that important distinction made by the apostles of Christ between traditions which are history and traditions which are superstition ;* separating the true from the false, clipping the text of history from the added gloss of bigotry ; sifting the kernel of the permanent and valuable from the mere chaff of the temporary and worthless. Historical traditions, as to objects of sight and of permanent existence, are as sure and as valuable in the land of our Saviour as in the land of Sesostris, of Alexander, of Cæsar, of Charlemagne, of Alfred, or of Washington. The primitive mode of baptism, the spot where our Lord received it, the identity of that spot with scenes in the lives of patriarchs and prophets,—these are objects of *sight*, matters of historical fact, and the tradition in reference to them, like all other permanent historical traditions, is the surest of all testimony and the most worthy of credit. It is testimony, in fact, of such a kind, that to reject it would be to leave the whole past without any basis of certainty. There can be no question that

* Compare Stephen's reference to Moses's learning, Paul's allusion to Jacob's leaning on his staff, and to Jannes and Jambres, and Jude's mention of Michael, Balaam, and Enoch, &c., where *historical traditions* are confirmed as *true*, with Christ's statement as to the *religious* "traditions of the elders." Mark vii. 3-13; Acts vii. 20-22; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Heb. xi. 21; Jude ix. 15.

John selected as the scene of his preaching and baptism the point on the Jordan where the great route of travel from Jerusalem and Jericho to the important cities beyond the river crossed; a spot most favorable to gather hearers, and at the same time furnishing facilities for immersion. In that age the spot bore a name so general in signification, and so changeable in form, that before Origen's day it began to be supplanted by another of similar import;* and afterward, for the same reason, this second name also disappeared. The only important fact, the *locality of our Lord's baptism*, is known long after its transitory name has passed away; just as the spot where the Pilgrims landed will a thousand years hence be certainly fixed, although even now only the antiquary knows that its original name was Pawtuxet.

Enon.

The second locality where John baptized, called *Enon*, cannot with so much precision be ascertained. Yet the following facts can be established: it was situated *on the Jordan*; it was

* The signification usually assigned to *Bethabara* is "house or place of the ford or passage," and that of *Bethany* (the name Origen rejected) is "house or place of ships," the two being equivalent.—See Robinson's N. Test. Greek Lexicon.

eight Roman or about seven and one third English miles south of ancient Bethshean or Scythopolis; and it was at or near the great thoroughfare from Galilee and Samaria across the Jordan to the important cities on the other side. That it was *on the Jordan* is implied in the fact, that no one of the New Testament writers mentions any other water than the Jordan in which John baptized. Eusebius and Jerome describe the location as well known in their early day; implying that, for the three hundred previous years since Christ's day, the place had always been marked. The former makes this record: "Ænon, near to Alim, where John baptized, as in the Gospel according to John. And even to the present time the place is shown, eight miles from Scythopolis, toward the south, near to Salim and the Jordan." The latter records: "Ænon, near Salim, where John baptized, as it is written in the Gospel according to John; and the place is now shown, at the eighth milestone from Scythopolis at the South, near Salim and the Jordan." The testimony of these ancient writers, who lived so near the time of Christ, and had such ample opportunities for investigation, fixes the site of Enon *on the Jordan*, and at seven and one third English miles south of ancient Scythopolis, or Bethshean, whose ruins yet remain a distinct landmark, bear-

ing the name of Beisan. Among more modern authors, Brocardus, in the later period of the Crusades, makes this mention of it: — "Before Mount Galaad, toward Jezreel, which is on the northern side of Mount Gilboa, a level road passes from Jordan at Salim, where John baptized. From Bethsan there are two Gallic miles (nearly three English) toward the west to Jezreel." A reference to Dr. Robinson's map will show that this road must have passed all along the north-western slope of Mount Gilboa, through the plain to the river; and that it was at the point upon the Jordan where the great thoroughfare from Western Galilee and Samaria crosses it, that John selected his favorable location for baptizing. Burkhardt has the following on the general locality. Of Beisan he says: "The ancient town was watered by a river now called *Moiet Bysan* (Waters of Beisan), which flows in different branches through the plain." "The town is built along the banks of the rivulet." Having spoken of the mountain range north of Beisan, he says: "At one hour distant to the south, the mountains begin again." Burkhardt crossed the Jordan, two hours distant (about six miles) from Beisan, from which point its ruins lay north-northwest. It was the 2nd of July, in midsummer, when he crossed; and at that season he found the stream

"80 paces broad and 3 feet deep." He adds: "the river is fordable in many places during summer, but the few spots where it may be crossed in the rainy season are known only to the Arabs. The river, for three hours from the lake [Tiberias], flows on the west side of the valley, then on the eastern, and at two hours south of the ford returns to the western side. Near where we crossed, to the south, are ruins called *Lukkot*." Burkhardt's statement as to the waters of the Beisan does not interfere with Josephus's statement, that the valley was without water except the Jordan;* since what he calls a *river* in one sentence he calls a *rivulet* in another. As he crossed evidently near the place where John baptized, his statement as to the size of the stream is valuable. His mention of the direction of the river from Beisan, nearly due south, shows that, according to Eusebius and Jerome's statement, Enon might be *south* of Beisan, and yet *on the Jordan*. We learn, also, that, at the point where John baptized, the valley ran near the eastern mountains, having on the west a plain where a habitable town would naturally stand. We see from his statement, also, that John's place of baptizing could not have been far from the thoroughfare by which Jacob and his family and flocks crossed.

* Josephus, Wars, IV. 8. 2.

Dr. Robinson thus describes Ain Jalud, "a very large fountain" near Jezreel, which is about eight miles northwest of Beisan: "It spreads out at once into a fine limpid pool forty or fifty feet in diameter, in which great numbers of small fish were sporting." In speaking of the stream which passes Beisan he says: "This would seem probably to be the rivulet which comes down from the valley of Jezreel."* While this account shows that in Palestine there are pools and other places where immersion might be practiced, it of course furnishes no information as to Enon, which was eight Roman miles south of Beisan. The celebrated English travelers, Irby and Mangles, make the following statements on this locality: "At one hour and twenty minutes from Bysan the depth of the ford reached above the bellies of the horses. We measured the breadth and found it 140 feet. . . . About half a mile to the south is a tomb on a barrow called Sheikh Daoud."

The expedition of Lieut. Lynch, during the spring of 1848, has added some important particulars to what was before known as to this locality. In his account of the day previous to his passing the section of the river where Enon must have been situated, he records, that, near their en-

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. III. pp. 167, 168, 175.

camping place (which on the map is two or three miles below Beisan), "the river describes a series of frantic curvilinears, and returns in a contrary direction to its main course." "The river averaged to-day forty-five yards in width, and four feet in depth." The land party who visited Beisan, not far from that town "came to quite a large stream," evidently the same mentioned above. The following day, during which the position of ancient Enon must have been passed, Lient. Lynch seems to have passed the most enchanting region on the river. Of this day he says: "The river, from its eccentric course, scarcely permitted a correct sketch of its topography to be taken. It curved and twisted north, south, east, and west, turning, in the short space of half an hour, to every quarter of the compass, seeming as if desirous to prolong its luxuriant meanderings in the calm and silent valley." "Here and there were spots of solemn beauty. The numerous birds sang with a music strange and manifold. . . . Above all, yet attuned to all, was the music of the river, gushing with a sound like that of shawms and cymbals. . . . At times we issued from the shadow and silence of a narrow and verdure-tented part of the stream into an open bend, where the rapids rattled, and the light burst in, and the birds sang their wild wood song." Over and over, with a

spirit resembling that of romance, the almost enchanted navigator repeats the varied beauties of that day's progress.

Knowing now, as we do, from the ancient Christian writers, that in the midst of this very scene stood "Enon," who can fail to see where the descriptive John obtained his expression "many waters" or "much water," for these interminable windings of the river certainly gave many a shady retreat, and a shallow, gentle flow, for the administering of immersion; and those "rattling rapids" and dashing cataracts are, in their appropriate measure, "*the voice of many waters.*" Further on, in reference to this same day's journey, Lieut. Lynch says: "In our course to-day we have passed twelve islands, all but three of diminutive size, and noted fourteen tributary streams, ten on the right [or west] and four on the left bank. With the exception of four, they were trickling rivulets." "The width of the river was as much as seventy yards, with two knots current, and narrowed again to thirty yards, with six knots current; the depth ranging from two to ten feet." "About five miles nearly due west from the camp were the ruins of Succoth." Lieut. Lynch has so much of his own impressions to record this day, that he has mentioned little or nothing of the observations of the land party, except that, on

account of the mountain range running near the river, they were obliged, most of the day, to travel far to the west of the stream. This, however, they were not obliged to do, until farther south than the site of ancient Enon.

It was the happy lot of your correspondent, four days afterward, on Tuesday, April 18th, 1848, to meet the party at the Pilgrim's bathing-place below, when Dr. Anderson became his companion to Jerusalem. Particular inquiries were made as to the shape of the country, and as to other particulars. No stream or fountain was met by the party during the day on which they traversed the plain where Enon once stood. No relic of such a name seems to remain. The permanent record of the early Christians, sanctioned by the New Testament writers, and confirmed by all subsequent observations, leaves no doubt that Enon was at a passage of the Jordan in the romantic region above described, and at a point which might be accurately ascertained by any one who should measure the distance from Beisan. It was my design to visit this locality, a few days after meeting the party on the Jordan, and personally to examine it; but on arriving within a day's journey of the region, no persuasion or offer of money could prevail on my Arab attendants to venture into the dangerous neighborhood. The replies to

my inquiries, however, and my own distant scanning of the region from mountain summits, left an impression hardly less definite and satisfactory than a personal visit could have given.

The Place where Philip baptized the Eunuch.

Yet one more locality in Palestine mentioned as the scene of Christian baptism in the time of the Apostles demands notice; namely, the place on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza where the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized by Philip. No spot in Palestine was marked with more interest and more particularity by the early Christian pilgrims and Christian scholars. The Bourdeaux Pilgrim, less than three hundred years after the event, described with care its situation. His note is (as he advances from Bethlehem): "Thence to Bethazsora is fourteen miles, where is the fountain in which Philip baptized the eunuch. Thence to the oak where Abraham dwelt is nine miles. Thence to Hebron is two miles." Eusebius, on the word *Bethsur*, has the following note: "Bethsur of the tribe of Judah or Benjamin. There is also now a village Bethsoran, twenty miles distant from Jerusalem toward Hebron, where also a fountain issuing from a mountain is shown, in which the eunuch of Candace is said to have been baptized by Philip. There is also another Beth-

sur in the tribe of Judah, distant one mile from the city of Eleutheropolis." Jerome in like manner says on the same word : "Bethsur in the tribe of Judah or Benjamin. And there is at this day a village Bethsoron, to us going from Jerusalem to Hebron, at the twentieth milestone ; near which a fountain, boiling up at the foot of a mountain, is absorbed by the same soil from which it springs ; and the Acts of the Apostles record that the eunuch of Queen Candace was baptized in this by Philip. There is another village Bethsur in the tribe of Judah, a mile distant from Eleutheropolis." In his beautiful eulogy on Paula, the Roman pilgrim, Jerome records : "She began to pass over the ancient way which leads to Gaza, the power or the riches of God, and in silence to revolve with herself how the Ethiopian eunuch, prefiguring the people of the nations, had changed his skin ; and while she read again the ancient document, she found again the fountain of the Gospel. And thence she passed to the right. From Bethsur she came to Escol, which is translated, the *grape-cluster*. . . . And she ascended to Hebron." In the days of the Crusaders the same locality was fixed. Brocardus, A. D. 1283, records : "From Hebron it is reckoned three Gallic leagues [four and a half Roman miles] toward the north, declining a little to the west, to *Nehel-Escol*, that is, the

torrent-bed of the grape-cluster, whence the spies bore the branch of the grape: Num. xiii. 23, 24, 25. At the left of this valley through half a league [three quarters of a Roman mile] descends the stream in which Philip baptized the eunuch of Queen Candace, not far from Sicelech. From *Nehel Escol* it is reckoned eight leagues [twelve Roman miles] to the house of Zachariah." At a later period, (perhaps for the reason that *Bethsur* was a general name, and given to different places, perhaps also from a spirit of controversy between the Eastern and Western Christians, or for convenience,) the location of the traditional spot was changed; as Sinai was in like manner changed to Serbal.* Hence several succeeding modern writers, as Quistorpius, Pococke, and Buckingham, describe the fountain of Philip as being in a valley, which Pococke states to be "about six miles north-northwest of Bethlehem." Dr. Robinson doubts the authority of the early tradition; intimating the two objections, that the Itinerary of the Bourdeaux Pilgrim makes Bethsur eleven Roman miles from Hebron, whereas it is but six miles to the site he himself (doubtless correctly) has marked for Bethsur, and again, that the road from Jerusalem to Gaza could not have

* Alluded to in Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. pp. 173-186.

passed that way. * As to the first difficulty, it is doubtless explained by Jerome, who describes Paula as *turning to the right* in going from Bethsur to Escol, evidently making a *circuit* around the mountain interposed, instead of going directly over it. The Bourdeaux Pilgrim is precisely accurate in the other distances he mentions; for his six miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and his fourteen miles from Bethlehem to Bethsur make the twenty miles of Eusebius and Jerome; and his two miles from the oak of Abraham to Hebron agrees precisely with the *forty minutes* occupied by Dr. Robinson in passing over the same ground. †

As to the second objection, Reland will reply to it. Dr. Robinson marks another locality, Tellel-Hasy (which is also on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza by way of Hebron), suggesting that there is a sufficient expanse of water for the administration, though he does not describe its size. ‡ Many others equally favorable might be mentioned on the same road; but the authority of Eusebius and Jerome, as to the precise locality where the rite was administered, cannot be disregarded where *baptism* is concerned, any more than where the site of an old Roman town, as Eleu-

* Researches, Vol. I. p. 320.

† Ibid., Vol. II. p. 429.

‡ Ibid. Vol. II. pp. 380, 641.

theropolis, is to be determined. The best authority in Biblical geography of modern times, Reland, speaking of *Bethsur*, regards the locality mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome to be the same as that mentioned among the mountains between Jerusalem and Hebron in Joshua's time, which was afterward fortified by Rehoboam.* He thinks it also the same as the *Bathsura* fortified by the Maccabees, which is described as "in Idumea," and again as "on the borders of Judea;" while he regards the mentioned distance, "five furlongs from Jerusalem," either to be a mistake, or to refer to another fortress.† As to the road to Gaza and the locality where the eunuch was baptized, Reland's language is: "Near this village there is fountain boiling up at the foot of the mountain, and in which, they say, the eunuch of Queen Candace was baptized. [See Eusebius in his *Onomasticon* and the *Jerusalem Itinerary*.] This tradition Cellarius argues to be false, because the Ethiopian was not going in the way leading to Hebron, but in the way leading to Gaza, which declines far to the west of Hebron. But, though Gaza may lie to the west of Hebron, the roads were not always constructed straight through the

* Josh. xv. 58 and 2 Chron. xi. 7.

† 1 Mac. iv. 29, 61; vi. 7, 26, 31, 49; ix. 52; xiv. 7, 33; also, 2 Mac. xi. 5, etc.

shortest routes ; nor do I think that by this circumstance the authority of this tradition is diminished. I acknowledge that a route might be established from Jerusalem to Gaza, first toward the west as far as the plains of Judah, and then through the region bordering on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea to Gaza. We know also that formerly (whether as early as the time at which the eunuch lived that third route existed is uncertain) journeys were made from Jerusalem to Eleutheropolis, and thence to Ascalon, and so on to Gaza. This follows from the Itinerary of Antonine. But that through Hebron also the journey to Gaza was made, follows from the fact, that in almost all the itineraries of the moderns we read that, if any one journeyed from Jerusalem to Gaza, they went through Hebron thither ; never, so far as I know, through the plains bordering on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea."

With reason does Reland express the doubt whether the route by Eleutheropolis existed in the eunuch's day ; since according to Dr. Robinson that town is not mentioned, even by its name *Betogabra*, until the beginning of the second century after Christ, nor by its later and more important name till the fourth century. On the Article "*Ælia Gazam*," *From Jerusalem to Gaza*, Reland presents the same view again. On the

word *Gaza* he expresses the opinion, that the word "desert," in Acts viii. 26, refers to the *city*, not to the *route*. It is worthy of remark, however, that the designation, coming as it does from the pen of Luke, is peculiarly applicable to the *route by Hebron*: for the *same writer* uses the *same word*, in the *same general sense*, and in describing the *same region*, when he mentions that John the Baptist was reared "in the deserts;" the home of John's parents, according to Dr. Robinson, being at Jutta near Hebron.*

Starting now from Jerusalem on the route thus indicated, let us view the facilities for immersion along its course, and especially at the spot where history has fixed the eunuch's baptism. Proceeding on horses, at the ordinary rate of three Roman miles an hour,† in two hours and thirty minutes we reach the three immense pools of Solomon, from which water was conducted to Jerusalem. In Christ's day they were little lakes of water, for the three cover about three acres of ground,‡ and when filled they furnished all needed facilities for immersion, lying open, as they do, and in a retired valley. Even now, such is the quantity of water in the lower pool, that a more

* See Luke i. 80.

† See Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 545.

‡ Ibid. Vol. II. p. 165.

convenient place for the sacred ordinance could hardly be desired. Proceeding thence over hill and dale, and through one long valley, which, from the number of its wells, the muleteers call "Wady-el-Beer," the *Valley of Wells*, in one hour and fifty minutes more we stopped on a hill-side to water our horses, and to drink at a large reservoir with an arched roof, from which the water is drawn up with a bucket. Of this place Dr. Robinson says: "The road up the ascent is artificial; half way up is a cistern of rain water, and an open place of prayer for the Mohammedan travelers."* At this spot immersion would not be difficult. Descending thence into the fine valley before us, crossing it, and ascending on the opposite side, in thirty-five minutes more we reached the ruins of an ancient town, which our muleteer calls Howoffnee, but which Dr. Robinson has marked Abu Fid; mentioning "olive-trees and tillage around, and a reservoir of rain water."† This *reservoir* lies in the open field, with a grassy brink around it. It is fifty or sixty feet square; and it is now, in the last of April, full of water, the depth being apparently from three to five

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 320. The water is evidently *spring-water*, rather than rain-water; for it is slightly tinctured with the limestone of the hills.

† Ibid., Vol. I. p. 320.

feet. It is evidently ancient, the walls being built up of large hewn stones. A fitter place for immersion could not be desired. Along in front of the old town and pool, a fine old Roman road, paved with stone and having neat curbing stones at the side, may be traced in the grass some distance down the hill-side toward Jerusalem; as evident a carriage-road as is the old Appian Way now seen south of Rome. Proceeding onward, through a country quite open and considerably cultivated, in one hour and five minutes we reach, at the foot of a long and steep hill, the ruins of a fortress or church on the left of our road. The structure is perhaps fifty feet front, and sixty feet long. Within there are the remains of two large halls, with an arched ceiling. The stones of the building are massive, some of them eight feet long and two feet square. There are three door-ways in front. In some respects it resembles a fortress, in others an ancient church. On the hill side, half a mile southwest, is another less ruined fortress. The one near us is called, by the shepherds keeping their flocks here, *Anee-ed-Dirweh*, and the other, *Es-Soor-ed-Dirweh*. In front of the fortress by us is a fine gushing fountain of sweet water, and broad stone troughs in which we water our horses. This spot has been fixed on by Dr. Robinson as the *Bethsur*

mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome as the place where the eunuch was baptized.* Halul, mentioned next to Bethsur in the list of towns of Joshua's age,† stands on the hill top, a mile or more distant, still called Hulhul by the natives. The *distance*, which we have made six hours by horse or eighteen Roman miles from Jerusalem on the *direct* route, agrees well with the twenty miles of the *ancient* route, which *bent easterly through Bethlehem*. The ground in front of the fountain and of the structure behind it is so broken up and covered with stones, that it is difficult to determine what was once here. There is now a slightly depressed hollow, with a sandy or gravelly bottom. It is hardly conceivable that, in the days of Herod, the fountain-builder, this most favorable spring should not have been made to supply a pool in this land of such structures; and even now water sufficient to supply such a reservoir flows from the troughs, and soaks into the soil; as, according to Jerome's mention, in his day it seems also to have been absorbed. That there was an *ancient* and even a *modern* route

* Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 320, note. Under the word Beth-tsur, in Robinson's edition of Gesenius's Hebrew Lexicon, the name Beit-Sur is said also to be applied to ed-Dirweh.

† Joshua xv. 58.

from Jerusalem to Gaza by *Hebron*, Reland and the ancient Christian writers have shown; and, what is more, even now the *usual* route from Jerusalem to Gaza is by Hebron. If the traveler at Gaza, for instance, hires horses and mules to Jerusalem, the *understanding* is, that the journey is to be made by Hebron, as the smoother and safer road; and an extra price must be paid to go by the more direct, though rougher and more dangerous route. That an ancient "*chariot*" road passed this way, the observant traveler will often perceive on his journey. Dr. Robinson twice between Hebron and Jerusalem, notices this;* and we have traced even plainer evidences.

The task to which you invited me is at length finished; having swelled into a more extended labor than was at first anticipated. If the conclusions here suggested shall seem to be just, awakening in the minds of other inquirers the same confident and cheering faith they have begotten in the mind of the writer, it will be an ample requital both for the toil of the study and for the fatigues of the journey.

Yours as ever,

G. W. S.

* Researches, Vol. I. pp. 316, 320; "the path is here paved," &c.; and "the road is artificial."



BV
808
.S2

1398953


Samson

The sufficiency of
water for baptizing.

1- 2097

1-

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



36 922 202

1398953

1398953

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



36 922 202

